


Recruiting as One Global Corporation

Matthew Tropiano





How do you take a global corporation—diverse in nature but unified in mission—and recruit and hire as one organization? Can a 19,000-person organization apply the motto *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one) to their recruitment and hiring efforts, and if so, how? How do you know when you are successful? What are your metrics?

Tropiano is the corporate recruiter for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command. He entered government service in 2001 as a Presidential Management Fellow. His background includes degrees in electrical engineering, business, and religious studies.



How do you take a global corporation—diverse in nature but unified in mission—and recruit and hire as one organization?

Naval Facilities Engineering Command is a global corporation whose mission is to strengthen Navy and Marine Corps combat readiness worldwide through facilities life cycle support focused on the fleet, fighter, and family. For the joint warfighter and all supported commanders, NAVFAC's vision is to deliver mission capability whenever and wherever required. With locations in Michigan; Washington; California; Virginia; Washington, D.C.; Hawaii; Florida; Guam; Japan; Djibouti; Bahrain; Egypt; Greece; and Italy, NAVFAC is truly a global corporation. Its recruiting and hiring tactics can be emulated by other defense organizations and Services.

Moving Toward a Battle for Jobs

According to the Department of Labor, the unemployment rate in January 2010 was at 7.6 percent and has consistently climbed to where it was at the time this article was written, at a staggering 9.4 percent. Economists are predicting that the unemployment rate will hit 10 percent. Department of Labor statistics also show the skyrocketing ratio of unemployed persons to jobs available.

In addition, for several years, the clarion cry around Washington, D.C., has been about looming retirements and the need to springboard into action on succession planning to fill those gaps. Certainly, statistical employment demographics still show an aging workforce, but the current economic climate has seen a movement from a battle for talent to fill those imminent retirements to a battle for jobs. Recent corporate job fairs in Detroit, Mich., and Washington, D.C., were attended by thousands of qualified professionals seeking employment. Additionally, with finances reduced due to the downturn in the market, many employees are not retiring when they are eligible. At NAVFAC alone, retiring employees this year were waiting more than 50 percent longer after their eligibility date than in previous years.

Those who work at NAVFAC and other government agencies find fulfillment in their public service jobs. A 2008 Merit Systems Protection Board survey revealed that 84 percent of those surveyed (more than 1,800) want the ability to make a difference, 97 percent want job security, and 45 percent of new hires under 30 plan to stay with the government

until they retire. Also, a 2008 Partnership for Public Service survey in which 32,000 non-federal employees were queried, public service ended up being one of the most popular choices for undergraduates. Finally, with an average age of 49 for current NAVFAC employees, new employees at NAVFAC have a tremendous opportunity for growth and development and can go on a possible fast track toward increased responsibility and work. Hence, current surveys reveal that NAVFAC provides what people are looking for in an employer. NAVFAC has the opportunity now to recruit and hire the best to serve those who are serving our country.

The Corporate Recruiting Partnership Team

The Corporate Recruiting Partnership team oversees NAVFAC's recruitment and hiring efforts. The partnership is made up of the lead recruiters from each of NAVFAC's organizations. Its charter is to integrate the recruiting and hiring process and to bring together the recruiting leads of NAVFAC to share best practices and resources, minimize duplication, and maximize recruiting and hiring efforts. The Corporate Recruiting Partnership enables NAVFAC to recruit as one corporation while retaining diversity of opportunities and localized distinctions.

The Strategy—Data-Driven Recruitment

In an article in *Fortune Magazine* (June 1999) titled "Why CEOs Fail," business consultant Ram Charan stated that in 70 percent of cases, disappointing company performance stemmed from faulty execution, not flawed strategy. It was hardly from lack of smarts or vision. Thomas Edison asserted that "Vision without execution is hallucination." Execution is the key. Unless the strategy is well executed, all the strategic planning is for naught.

NAVFAC's goal will be to meet its current and future demand signal and lower the current vacancy rate while simultaneously increasing its corporate diversity. NAVFAC's present and future vacancies and their locations coupled with succession planning analysis will let the Corporate Recruiting Partnership know where the demand for new hires resides. By using accurate vacancy data, the Corporate Recruiting Partnership team will set NAVFAC's course toward ensuring effective recruitment practices.

The Recruiting Corporate Partnership members cannot attend every job fair or every college or recruitment initiative. NAVFAC's recruitment leaders are not social workers, career counselors, or online match-making services trying to make a match with every person they meet. The National Association of Colleges and Employers in a recent e-mail stated that the best job referral programs work when employees refer not the people they know best, but rather, refer the best people—the best civil engineers, the best urban planners, and the best electricians. Hence, the Corporate Recruiting Partnership members will go only to particular events, associations, and institutions that impact NAVFAC's demand signal or NAVFAC's diversity needs.

The current and future vacancy data must drive the partnership's choices as to where they target their recruiting efforts, and the data must be updated regularly. The expected outcome is that NAVFAC will become appropriately staffed with people of amazing excellence and a level of diversity that matches NAVFAC's needs.

That is Phase One of NAVFAC's recruiting plan. Phase Two will apply succession planning principles that will enhance Phase One's recruiting efforts. Effective succession planning will allow NAVFAC's current and potential employees to see the opportunity and road ahead of them and are able to drive diligently and purposefully towards it. More specifically, Phase Two will require that NAVFAC look two, five, and 10 years into the future to determine what its future mission needs will be and what skills will be needed to accomplish that mission. In addition, using the retirement data available now and in the future, NAVFAC can extrapolate and determine the vacancies in two, five, and 10 years. Phase Two builds upon Phase One and adds depth to NAVFAC. While Phase One provides the vision as to how NAVFAC will accomplish its current mission, Phase Two provides the insight as to how NAVFAC will accomplish its mission in the future.

The Scoreboard

The proposed metrics for the Corporate Recruiting Partnership will be the number of vacancies filled as well as the number of interviews, acceptances, and declinations. That must be the primary measure of success. People like to know how what they are doing affects the bottom line. When that happens, they are more focused, determined, and energized.

The partnership will have three purpose-driven meetings a year—a preview meeting, a renew meeting, and a review meeting. The preview meeting will be held prior to the start of the fiscal year. The preview meeting will answer the question: where and how will the NAVFAC Corporate Recruiting Partnership recruit based on NAVFAC's current and future demand signal? In addition, leads will be identified for national, regional, and local initiatives (events, associations, colleges, institutions) and a standardization of approach and procedure and metrics will be agreed upon. At the mid-year renew meeting, the partnership will look at how it is doing in light of the plan launched at the preview meeting. Do adjustments and changes need to be made in the partnership's approach, procedures, or pursuits? Finally, in the renew meeting held at the end of the year, the partnership will examine how it did, closely reviewing its metrics and vacancy rate.

Outcome of Inaugural Preview Meeting

In August 2009, the Corporate Recruiting Partnership had its first inaugural preview meeting to discuss and decide where and how NAVFAC was going to recruit and hire as one corporation. A draft of the strategic recruiting concept and its execution was presented (it is currently being updated for fiscal year 2011) as well as best practices for reaching out

The current and future vacancy data must drive the Recruiting Corporate Partnership's choices as to where they target their recruiting efforts, and the data must be updated regularly.



to Transition Assistance Program classes for those retiring from the military.

The Corporate Recruiting Partnership identified a draft of planned events and tasks to be accomplished to meet the current demand signal through recruiting and hiring. At the meeting, the Corporate Recruiting Partnership proposed a standardized, collaborative, and corporate approach to recruitment events. The events will be based on NAVFAC's demand signal (in process), diversity needs, and business leadership input.

The current proposed major fiscal year 2010 products from this collaborative effort are as follows:

- An integrated, standardized and collaborative approach to several national, regional, and local recruiting events
- Establishment of a resume tool to share, track, and find the best candidates for the NAVFAC corporation
- Coordination, attendance, and participation at events specific to NAVFAC's demand signal based on vacancy, diversity, and mission criteria
- Unified and corporate approach to recruiting and hiring retiring officers and sailors who meet NAVFAC's demand signal
- A corporate vacancy list to equip the Corporate Recruiting Partnership for recruiting and hiring activities at events, institutions, and associations.

NAVFAC is a global corporation with positions and missions worldwide, and it is on the crest of a strong tide. With an updated and accurate demand signal and data-driven execution, NAVFAC will take the direction that best serves the U.S. Navy as it recruits and staffs itself with outstanding people who can provide the best service.

The author welcomes comments and questions and can be contacted at matthew.tropiano@navy.mil.